



National Family Caregiver Support Program

Working to Build the Future of Long-Term Care

Empowering adults as they age with reliable information and access to the care they need

Enabling individuals who are at high risk of nursing home placement to remain at home

Building disease prevention into community living through the use of low-cost, evidence-based programs

Background on Family Caregiving

Families, not social service agencies, nursing homes or government programs, are the mainstay underpinning long term care (LTC) for older and disabled persons in the United States. More than 44 million persons are informal caregivers – providing unpaid help to persons who live in the community and have at least one limitation on their activities of daily living. These caregivers include spouses, adult children, and other relatives and friends.

The degree of caregiver involvement has remained fairly constant for more than a decade, bearing witness to the remarkable resilience of the American family in taking care of its older persons. This is despite increased geographic separation, greater numbers of women in the workforce, and other changes in family life. Thus, family caregiving has been a blessing in many respects. It has been a budget-saver to governments faced annually with the challenge of covering the health and long term care expenses of persons who are ill and have chronic disabilities. The economic value of our nation's family and informal caregivers has been estimated at \$306 billion annually.

The National Family Caregiving Support Program

The enactment of the Older Americans Act Amendments of 2000 established an important new program, the National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP). The program calls for all states, working in partnership with area agencies on aging and local community-service providers to have five basic services for family caregivers.

These services include:

- Information to caregivers about available services;
- Assistance to caregivers in gaining access to services;
- Individual counseling, organization of support groups, and caregiver training to caregivers to assist the caregivers in making decisions and solving problems relating to their caregiving roles;
- Respite care to enable caregivers to be temporarily relieved from their caregiving responsibilities; and
- Supplemental services, on a limited basis, to complement the care provided by caregivers.

Currently funded at \$162 million including The Native American Caregiver Support Program, this program has served more than 750

Implementation of the NFCSP has resulted in new partnerships, improved access to services, outreach to special populations, and provision of services to respond to the unique needs of families.

Eligible Populations

- Family caregivers of older adults, age 60 years or older;
- Caregivers of a person with Alzheimer's disease or a related disorder (regardless of age);
- Grandparents and relative caregivers, age 55 years or older, of children no older than age 18;
- Relative caregivers, age 55 years or older, of an adult child aged 19-59, with a disability (not including natural or adoptive parents).

The statute requires states to give priority consideration to:

- Persons in greatest social and economic need (with particular attention to low-income individuals); and
- Older individuals providing care and support to persons with severe disabilities, including children with severe disabilities.

Other Important Features

In addition to the formula grants, state and area agencies on aging, nonprofit community service providers, institutions of higher education, and national organizations received grants for a three year period to develop innovative approaches to assist families and informal caregivers of older persons as well as grandparents and older relatives who are caregivers of children.

Also, nearly \$5 million in grants were awarded to tribal organizations in September 2001 to provide families of Native American and Native Hawaiian elders with access to information, respite care, counseling, training, and supplemental services to help them meet their real-life caregiving challenges. This new program supporting caregivers of Native Americans received \$6.3 million for Fiscal Year 2007.

The National Aging Services Network

Under the authority of the Older Americans Act, AoA works closely with the National Aging Services Network of federal, state, and local organizations to plan, coordinate, and provide home- and community-based services to meet the unique needs of older persons and their caregivers.

Who to Contact for Help

AoA supports a nationwide, toll free information and assistance directory and website called the Eldercare Locator, which can connect older persons and their caregivers with the National Aging Services Network. Older persons and caregivers can call the Eldercare Locator toll free at 1-800-677-1116 or visit www.eldercare.gov.

Additional Resources

AoA Caregiver Resource Room -
<http://www.aoa.gov/prof/aoaprogram/caregiver/caregiver.asp>

Family Caregiver Alliance – www.caregiver.org

National Alliance for Caregiving –
www.caregiving.org

For More Information

AoA recognizes the importance of making information readily available to consumers, professionals, researchers, and students. Our website provides information for and about older persons, their families, and professionals involved in aging programs and services. For more information about AoA, please contact: US Dept of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging, Washington, DC 20201; phone (202) 619-0724; fax (202) 357-3523; Email: aoainfo@aoa.gov or contact our website at www.aoa.gov